



**we met evil when
we were only
children**

lonelyghosts

we met evil when we were only children by lonelyghosts

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Summary:

The Losers' Club were already broken, before Pennywise.

[indefinite hiatus; i probably won't come back to this. sorry for those of you who were hoping for new chapters]

1. he thrusts his fists against the posts and still insists he sees the ghosts

Summary for the Chapter:

Bill.

Here's what he remembers- vomit, stuffed nose, paraffin wax in the dark. Paintbrush on the yellowed paper. The smell of sharpie markers and rain. Georgie, outside his window, waving up. The crackle of the radio static.

Bill was sitting in bed when he heard Georgie speak, saying, "No no no," and a voice (unfamiliar, rotten-sweet, sickening) floats up from the radio, saying, "Hello Georgie," before the radio cuts out. And he knows, he *knows* there's no way he couldn't have saved him in time, that he would have arrived too late-

At night, though, he sees his mother's distraught face at the piano when the woman had knocked on their door with the bit of yellow cloth in her hands, the way his father had dropped the toolkit on the ground, the scratches on the hardwood floor, and he hears Georgie's voice saying *Billy Billy Billy help me-*

The smell of rot and popcorn and blood and shitwater as the voice says, "Hello Georgie,"-

He can't help but blame himself for it. How could he not?

After Georgie's death disappearance, everything changes.

His mother stops working. His father starts working too much. Bill wakes up to a house with a dusty piano and an untouched room next to his, mother weeping softly in her bed as his father bangs things to pieces in the garage. He thinks, if I could prove that- if I could bring him back- if I could find the wound in this house, find the thread, stitch this gaping hole back up, if I could fix this-

He tries his best. He spends every afternoon in the Barrens and he

knows that Eddie doesn't really get it, and Richie's in it because he's an asshole who takes every opportunity to fuck around, but Stan gets it a little, at least. Stan's the one who pulls him out of the sewers at six o'clock and says, "It's time to go home, Big Bill," and Bill stutters his way through protests but Stan says, "Please, Bill," and he goes.

He goes home to the empty house and sits at the empty table and determinedly does not cry into the microwaveable food that's been left out on the counter for him.

He goes to school and excuses himself during art class when they start sculpting wax figurines and then he cries in the boys' bathroom, thinking, *Georgie where are you I miss you come HOME*, and when the tears are gone he wipes his face clean and goes back and when Richie asks "Where'd you go man? We missed you," he just says, "I had to take a leak."

None of them mention the redness of his eyes. He's grateful for that.

In the darkness of the Barren he can pretend he's not afraid. He can pretend he's not afraid of what he might find- Georgie's body, whitewashed and lifeless and broken- Georgie's yellow rainboots, stained with blood. He can pretend, Georgie is here and he's waiting for me.

Just around the corner. Just around the corner. Just around the corner, he's waiting for you Bill, he's waiting for you, he's waiting to come home.

(Georgie does not come home).

Sometimes Bill swears to god he sees him.

In the laughs of Stan's little sister Rebecca, he hears Georgie giggling along. In the flashes of yellow plastic on rainy days, Bill would swear he sees a little boy in the rain. In the crackle of static on the phone, he can hear Georgie breathing, slow and soft and sleepy.

In paraffin wax. In paintbrushes. On sick days. In the mirror.

Come home, Georgie, he thinks. Come home, please.

It's on a May day, rainy and muggy and full of reminders, that Bill finally snaps.

His mother won't look at him. She won't even leave her room. His father won't speak to him, won't look at him, just grunts and points and gestures. He's an intruder in his own home, in a place of mourning. Dressed in white at Georgie's funeral.

His mother comes downstairs in the way she does- slowly, as if she's dragging herself down just by moving. Puts a TV dinner in the microwave and waits, eyes half-lidded, not even seeing him. And it's too much. It's too much.

"W-W-Why won't you luh-luh-look at me?" he cries, plaintive, and she doesn't even flinch at it, she just stares straight ahead. "W-W-Why won't you look at me? Why duh-duh-don't you look at me? Am I n-n-not good enough? Is it b-b-because you blame me? Do you b-b-b-blame me? L-l-look at me, Mom, I'm still here! I'm still h-h-hurting, Mom! I m-m-miss Juh-juh-juh-Georgie-"

She moves faster than she has in weeks. He doesn't even see it coming when she hits him so hard he goes flying across the room, cutting him off, hits the wall with a crack that sickens him distantly and goes limp, all the fight gone out of him.

Bill is a small boy, built for elbows and knees, and he feels smaller than ever staring up at his mother as she looms above him. This isn't his mother, he thinks vaguely. This isn't his mother, soft and sweet and kind and piano-playing, the virtuoso of their small town. The one who used to tuck him into bed not two months ago, laughing in her musical way, the one who made him cookies and ruffled his hair-

Her hand grabs his face and her long, ragged nails dig deep into the soft flesh of cheeks, pulling him up so he's forced to look at her.

"Don't you ever speak his name to me like that again," she hisses. "Don't you ever!"

Behind her, the microwave timer beeps cheerfully. Her grip loosens and slackens altogether as she turns, pulls the TV dinner out of the microwave, and leaves the kitchen.

Bill does not cry or move or speak. When his father enters a few hours later, he glances at his son, winces, and turns around again.

Eventually, he drags himself back upstairs and into bed. At school the next day he evades all questions with a stuttering mouth, and eventually they stop bringing it up, but when Stan puts his arm around Bill's waist, gentle, more of a reassurance than anything he could ever say, Bill whispers, "Th-th-thank you."

He and Stan walk home in the dark that night. Richie went home early with a shit-eating grin, saying, "Ma's making lasagna, I'm not missing that," and Eddie had his ridiculously early curfew, so it's just the two of them, alone in the dark, holding hands, saying nothing.

They get to Stan's house and stop. Stan turns, takes Bill's hands in his own and says, "It's not your fault."

Bill can almost believe it when it's coming from Stan's lips and Stan is looking at him like that, like he'll fight the world to prove it, like he'll go toe-to-toe with Bill's self-esteem and duke it out till one of them comes out a winner. Like Stan believes it.

There's not much he can say to that, but he doesn't have to say anything. Not with Stan.

Stan pulls him close and Bill buries his head in his shoulder and cries until he thinks his body is out of water. Till his head aches from the excessive amount of tears, till Stan's cardigan is never ever getting that stain of snot out. And that's enough. That's enough.

They pull apart but not before Stan presses a kiss to Bill's forehead and says, "It's going to be alright," and Bill feels for the first time in two months like there's something to live for.

In the dark of his basement, with Georgie in the black water, he

thinks, *you came home*.

But he hasn't and Bill knows it. Bill knows (as much as he doesn't want to) that Georgie is never coming home again. But there's a clown in his basement using Georgie's voice and Georgie's body and that's something to fight for.

That's something to take revenge for.

"I saw the clown," he says in the middle of the street, astride Silver, more sure of anything than he's ever been. Richie snorts in disbelief, but Bill doesn't back down from that. "I saw the clown."

In the sewers he walks forward, into the dark. Into the unimaginable. Into the place his brother died.

His mother doesn't want him to speak Georgie's name. But Bill does. Bill doesn't stop speaking it. Bill doesn't stop thinking it either. He doesn't stop thinking, *Georgie's dead. But I'm alive, and that's what he wanted. And I'm not letting any other kid like him get hurt.*

He thrusts his fists against the posts and still insists he sees the ghosts.

Notes for the Chapter:

bill isn't my favorite of the losers (mostly cause he's a blatant stephen king self-insert) but i love him and exploring his survivor's guilt and his relationship with stan

2. the turtle wouldn't help us

Summary for the Chapter:

Stanley Uris is hard-eyed and tight-lipped and maybe Mike knows the past and Bill knows the present but Stan knows the future, and it's not one that has him in it.

Notes for the Chapter:

trigger warnings for: depression, suicidal ideation, self-hate, dysphoria, misgendering, transphobia, antisemitism, heavy gore

a lot more of this is based off the book but basically: in the book stan is afraid of drowning (he sees 2 drowned kids in the standpipe and a naked lady at another point). also this takes place under the assumption that the losers club happened when they were around 13, georgie disappeared when they were 12

this chapter in particular is dedicated to my friend billy, the True Real Stanley Uris! i hope you enjoy this somewhat angsty trans stan content

Here are Stan's biggest fears: drowning in the dark. Naked girls in bathtubs. The haunting sound of flutes right behind your ear. Women out of abstract paintings, their bodies so distorted and broken and uneven that their every breath is heaving, pain, sewn back together, Frankenstein bodies full of stitches-

Okay, so maybe he's projecting a little.

Maybe it's less about drowning and more about his fear of public pools and his naked legs. His jawline, his chest, the baby fat that collects around his cheeks and thighs. Maybe the fear comes more from his own body than anyone else's.

It's about the way his own body is twisted. The way he's ruining himself slowly. The way that his body has betrayed him, or the way he's betrayed his body.

Either one. Both of them. It's the same thing in the end.

Stan hasn't gone to the pool since he was around seven and he had the Realization.

He'd been wanting to go to the waterpark that was in the next town over, the one full of slides and diving boards and tubes. And he was grinning happily and his parents were calling him the name that had never felt right in his mouth or in anyone else's, and then he was in the changing room wearing a one-piece that turned his body into something that he didn't want it to be, uncomfortable in his own skin, and his feet were walking along the dirty damp bathroom, and then he was in the water, somehow, like the world had fast-forwarded. Like he'd been taken apart and left behind, laid bare in the sun and rotted. His whole body felt stuck in the wrong place, it felt wrong wrong wrong, and in his own confused self-hatred he'd walked out too deep and his head went under-

He doesn't remember much after that. Towels and choking and chlorine in his mouth. The silent drive back home. The worried looks. The overwhelming feeling that he'd somehow destroyed something. That he'd never be able to come back from it.

(It was a year later that he sat in the kitchen and tried, haltingly, to explain the way the word boy fit in his mouth, as sunlight streamed through the windows and his mother looked at him unknowably and his father looked at him with shock. It was a year later that he stopped answering to the first name he'd been given and started going by Stanley).

He did not go back to the pool. It was four years until he was able to take baths without feeling the panic well up in his throat.

His parents were good parents. About as good as two parents of a trans boy could be in the 1980s. And Stan was more grateful than

words could say for that.

There were questions. There were always questions. The "are you sure?" and the "but you looked so happy in dresses, you seemed so happy with yourself" and the dreaded and hated "Is this our fault?"

As if it was their fault. As if those words didn't make him shrink and curl up, remind him that it was *Bad*, that he was *Bad*, that he was a blot on the world, something you need to fix, something to be rewritten and redrawn until he fit, achingly, painfully, into this body he hated-

But they got better at it.

It was almost without any of his prompting. They threw away all his old skirts and the flouncy blouses. His mother knitted him more kippahs than he could possibly wear, her rows crooked and the patterns warped by her laughable skills at knitting. They called up all of his big family and told them that Stanley was a boy and if they didn't like it then they could kindly fuck right off and stay away, and they spoke to the rabbi at the synagogue. that they went to every so often for holidays and special occasions and days that Stanley's mom just felt like it and asked to please officially change the records to reflect the truth as Stan waited out in the car, feeling sorta sick but mostly grateful because didn't his parents love him so fucking much despite it all?

What Stanley remembers and treasures most, though, is the rainy day in the living room when they paged through baby name books to find one that would fit him, his head tucked against his mother's shoulder, his father chuckling at some of the more ridiculous names, their arms around him and holding him tight, never letting go, and his whole heart filling with love, love, love-

That's the thing he holds onto, when the other boys snicker about his yarmulkes and his baby fat face, the girl pretending to be a boy. He holds on to the rainy day in the living room full of love and laughter.

And then he gets transferred to the public school after his fifth-grade teacher won't call him by his real name, and it all changes.

He meets the Losers Club like this:

Stan's in the cafeteria, picking at his lunch. It's the second week of school, and he still doesn't have friends because even if they don't know about the trans thing, it's kind of hard to be Jewish in Derry, Maine. He's pretty sure that he's the only one in his grade. Most everyone else still goes to the private school at the synagogue, so he's entirely alone.

And that makes him a target.

As if to prove his point, a hand tangles in his curls and forces his head down into his tray so hard that he can feel the blood start pouring out of his nose, and he gasps for air as red pasta sauce splashes up all over his face and he tries to say something but all that he can get out is an unintelligible groan.

"Hey there," hisses Henry Bowers into Stan's ear, and his whole body goes stiff with fear.

He's heard the stories about Bowers. How his dad's the police chief and he can get away with just about anything. About how he beats up kids that don't help him out. About the things that he did to Marcus Edison last fall- the rumors about the *real* reason that the Edisons left, that the kid had been so beaten up they hadn't recognized him when they found him.

With that in mind, Stanley doesn't say anything, just tries to keep breathing, ignoring the words that Henry's saying, the slurs that he thought no one said anymore outside of books about Nazis, ignoring everything, ignoring it all-

He realizes a second too late that they're pulling his head back up. Someone grabs him by the neck, fingernails digging into his skin, and starts to drag him away. Stan is starting to regret sitting at the back of the cafeteria, because no one is noticing as they tug him down the hall, no one is *noticing*-

"Don't even think of screaming," Bowers hisses, and Stan closes his mouth with a snap.

There are only two of them, which is good. There's Bowers, obviously, and Victor Criss, who's tall and broad and brainless, and Stan figures there's no way he's getting out of this without a few bruises. Or more than a few. But if he's good, he tells himself, if he does what they want him to, at least he'll make it out without any broken bones. Probably.

Bowers opens up the door to one of the classrooms, muttering about how 'no one ever goes in here during this lunch period' to Criss, and Stanley accepts his fate, when someone says, "What the *fuck* are you doing?"

Apparently Bowers is wrong, because this room is definitely not abandoned.

There are three kids in the room. Stan recognizes one of them- the kid with big glasses that make him look like he's got bug eyes. His name is Richie or something, and Stan only recognizes him based off the fact that he's an asshole. He talks too much, he's moving all the fucking time, he swears more than anyone Stan's ever met, and he has a plethora of 'your mom' jokes the likes of which most kids can only dream of. He's an asshole, and Stan doesn't like him much, but he's grateful to see him right now. Richie's dumb or brave enough to stand up to Bowers over shit like this, and he's confident enough to sell the idea that he might even win.

The other two he doesn't recognize. One of them- the one who spoke- is very short. Tiny, in fact. He has well-coiffed brown hair, he's got his arms folded in the universal sign of disapproval, and he's wearing a polo shirt and a fannypack. In school.

Stan wonders how he's survived this long.

Last boy is silent but practically vibrating with rage. He's got ruffled hair and blue eyes and a flannel shirt and he looks like the kind of boy that Stan wants to be. The kind of boy that is calm and put-together and silently intimidating and kind. He looks like a leader.

"I said what the *fuck* are you doing!" The tiny kid yells again, and Stan snaps out of his reverie.

Richie steps forward, eyes narrowed. "My pal Eds here asked you a question," he sneers, puffing out his chest in some misguided attempt at looking intimidating. It doesn't work- Richie just looks like an idiot- but Stan appreciates the effort.

"Fuck off, Tozier," Bowers drawls, but his grip on the fold of skin on the back of Stan's neck loosens.

"Y-y-you need to leave," the other boy says, moving toward the pair of them, and his teeth are bared and they all look like they mean business.

Stan can feel Henry grinning, the sharktooth smile that he's wearing, when he speaks. "Yeah? And what'll you do about it?"

There's a moment of silence before Eds or whatever his name is says, "Do you *really* want to fuck with my mother, Bowers? On school grounds? With at least three eye-witnesses? I mean," he chuckles, and the look on Richie's face is saying Eds just pulled his trump card, "like, I knew you were an idiot, Henry, but really? *Really?*"

Bowers stops grinning. There's silence, and Stan gasps as the grip on his neck finally, *finally*, lets go.

"Your mother can't protect you forever," Henry sneers down at them, and the look on his face is truly chilling and for a minute he believes the rumors about the Edison kid even though he knows they're probably fake. "Your mother can't protect you forever."

Eds doesn't dispute that- you pick your battles, Stan figures- and Criss and Bowers slink out the door casually, if somewhat hunched over and disappointed.

And Stan's afraid, he really is. Because they're all going to pay for trying to save him. They will all pay for it, somehow. He can see it the way that he does sometimes, in strange déjà-vu flashes of colors and pictures and words. They're going to pay in blood and pacts and bathrooms that stink of metallic antiseptic (and other things) and a twice-broken arm and there will be rocks thrown, fireworks in their shoes and fear in their souls, and nothing will end well for any of them. They are going to end bloodily in the dark and if they survive

it will never ever be the same-

Then Richie Tozier turns to him and says, "Hey, you're the fucker in my science class," and Stan wipes it from his mind in favor of learning the names of two of the boys that he's going to spend the rest of his life caring about.

He sees the wrong-faced woman in his father's study and thinks *no no no this is wrong this is wrong this is WRONG I swear, is this what I look like? Am I just like this woman, broken and ugly and disgusting and wrong-bodied and strange? Am I the one who is broken?*

And afterwards he does not look at himself in a mirror for two weeks for fear of confirmation of what he already knows. He avoids the bathroom but that's not new and Bill holds his hand in the Barrens and Richie giggles but he can't stop thinking about it.

About being different. Being broken. Being wrong.

They're on the hill by the abandoned train tracks when Stan tells them the truth, which is to say: wrong body. Wrong mouth. The way boy fits better, like a warm sweater swathed round his shoulders. How his whole body feels wrong and bad and unfair, a curse and a punishment, something he'd done wrong or would do wrong in the future, like someone above had said, look at this fucking idiot-

He's crying before he knows it, snot dripping from his nose and Bill's arms wrap around him, and Richie's patting him on the back and Eddie's looking at him with ferocity in his eyes and saying, "We'll kill anyone who says you're not a boy, that you're not a good person," and these are his friends who love him and he is not alone.

Bill pulls back, smooths back Stan's hair, and says, "You're the most handsome boy I know," and Richie is acting mock-offended in the background but all that Stan can see is Bill's big blue eyes and his soft mouth, heart fluttering like butterfly soft wings with love and he thinks, *you are the kindest boy I know*, and he thinks, *when you say things like that I can actually believe it*, and he thinks, *oh*.

Oh.

At night, it is different.

At night, he is alone. At night, he dreams.

The dream starts with Eddie. It is Eddie covered in black slime, screaming with proud anger in the dark. There is a girl in green overalls with a set mouth and hair like fire, her glowing eyes set in impassive righteousness, holding a sharpened crowbar. There is a boy with soft rolls round his waist and a softer smile that opens up to bite down. There is a black boy with reading glasses and steady hands that are better suited to books than they are anything else, but they fit nicely around a bolt gun anyways. Richie yelling profanities as he raises a baseball bat high and smashes it down.

Bill, yelling, *THIS IS FOR GEORGIE* as his hands clench, red flannel shirt billowing about him like a flag, and he has never looked more beautiful.

Stan sees himself, bleeding from the face, grinning with terror-crazed anger, hands bludgeoning down, broken bottle in his hands smashing down again and again as he fights back.

And then it changes.

There's Eddie on the ground, arm ripped off, bleeding profusely as he coughs up black bile, remaining hand still grasping for the aspirator that lies only a few inches away. The girl in red screaming as she's torn apart in a gush of red that splatters across him, the fat boy's head rolling slowly down the floor as his body sinks to his knees, face stricken in an expression of permanent terror.

The black boy, in a scream of horror, as hands wrap around his and *tear* until he is left with stumps.

Richie crying in a way that Stan has never seen him do, blood trickling down his mouth and collecting in the open wound that was once his neck, trying to speak but only managing to wrench up more blood that mixes with his tears. His body is bent unnaturally and as

Stan watches in open-mouthed terror a foot comes down and *crunch*, there go Richie's ribs, crushed by the weight-

There's Bill, face slack with despair and his whole body slumping down as he is slowly, slowly ripped open, and Stan feels himself cry out in anguish, in anger-

And then it's him. It's Stan himself, his body being broken, bit by bit, bone by bone, each limb cracking out as he whimpers in pain, before his head is forced into the sewer water and he tries to breathe out but he can't, he can't breathe, he can't breathe, he can't *breathe*, not like this, not through the pain of this-

It changes again in a swirl of color, or rather the removal of it. It turns into him in a white room, on his knees before a man he cannot see, begging, begging. Begging for help.

"Help me," he says without speaking. "Help me, we can't do this alone, we're just kids and we weren't meant for this. We weren't meant to fight and die like this, you have to help us you have to help us-"

But there is a shaking head and a denial. His hand is open but no one will clasp it.

The turtle wouldn't help us, he thinks. Nothing would. No one will help us. We are alone, all seven of us. Dying in the dark.

On Neibolt Street, Bill opens his mouth and a speech comes out and Stan would follow Bill anywhere, he would, but Bill doesn't know what's going to happen. Bill doesn't know that they're all doomed, Beverly and Ben and Mike and Richie and Eddie and him and Bill doesn't know the truth.

Stan isn't a coward. He knows this. He'd follow Bill anywhere. He doesn't mind being slowly broken in the dark as the water fills his mouth and nose and he tries his hardest to breathe, breathe, breathe-

But he can't bear seeing his friends all die around him, swatted down

like flies by something more powerful than them. More powerful than anything they've ever seen.

Stanley Uris is hard-eyed, tight-lipped, trying to find a way to explain the way this makes him so afraid for them. And maybe it was Mike who came to them with his hands full of books and his mind full of facts, and maybe it's Bill who's their leader, the one who knows them all like the back of his hand. But it's Stanley who knows the future of them all, and it scares him to death.

But Bill's looking at him like he believes in them. Like he believes in Stanley.

So Stan keeps his mouth shut.

After- everything. After he makes them swear (because he dreamt of It again, the way he knows he might always dream of It) and they cut their palms on broken glass and he clasps Bill's hand in his like it's the last time they're going to see each other (and it is, in a way), he goes home.

He goes home, and he carries on, and he pretends that he's the same boy he was.

And at night, if he dreams of them again as adults, he does not speak of it.

If he dreams of his own body (adult, now, and scarred on the chest, looking the way he's wanted to look for once in his life) lying in an unfamiliar bathroom, the bathtub overflowing with pinked water, Its name on the wall in his own blood- well. He will not speak of it.

He dreams of Eddie, lying face-up and alone in the sewer, missing an arm. He dreams of Beverly holding hands with a girl who's got hair like sunlight and eyes like the moon. He dreams of Richie speaking into a radio. He dreams of Ben in a bar, alone, with lemon juice running down his face and alcohol in his mouth. He dreams of Mike, eyes older than they have any right to be, writing into a journal filled

with newspaper clippings.

And he dreams of Bill, Bill astride Silver, hands scarred by the broken glass bottle from twenty-seven years ago, his mouth set, saying *Stanley Uris* as if he's something to be avenged. As if he's another child eaten alive and swallowed whole.

He wakes and thinks, *no*.

Stan dreams the future, but it is not a future anymore, not now that he's seen it. Maybe the dreams are a gift, and maybe they're a curse from It, trying to scare him away from what's to come.

But it doesn't matter, because he's not going to need to be avenged. He's not dying. He's not broken. He's not wrong. He's Stanley Uris, and he's going to survive.

Notes for the Chapter:

A N Y W A Y S in my version of IT, carrie & beverly are gfs and carrie makes sure that stan doesnt die and neither does eddie and they all live happily ever after lmao,